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WORDS, READING AND LITERATURE AND THE SCHOOL

AS IT WAS, IS AND SHOULD BE.

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Maine. Office of State Superintendent of Schools.

Words, Reading and Literature, and the School as it was, is and should be.

From the Educational Department, State of Maine.

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READING AND LITERATURE.

THE STUDY OF WORDS.

Many students have vocabularies so limited they cannot understand or appreciate the subject matter studied. This deficiency is due to the fact that so little time is devoted to the study of words. Some teachers fail to do the work expected of them because their general and technical vocabularies are so meager they cannot comprehend what they read, or the force of what they say.

This knowledge can only be acquired by an intelligent and persistent study of words as individual items, and this work must be continued until the student has a knowledge of the sources from which the words came, an understanding of their original significance, the changes they have undergone and their present meanings. In addition to this he must know the part of each word which forms the root, which parts are the prefix and suffix and the extent to which each extends or limits the root-word.

The teacher must also study classical English until she has a knowledge of the finer shadings given to words by those who use them as means to embody beauty, express thought, stimulate emotion, defend opinion, re-enforce convictions and bless life. This reading will enable her to discern those delicate distinctions which give to words in certain relations their peculiar fitness and force. She will see that "They are apples of gold in pictures of silver."

While she must know the analyses and definitions of the words composing her vocabulary, yet she needs more than all this can give her. She needs such a comprehension of thought as a unit as will permit her to receive its message. This knowledge will make it possible for her to say with dignity and propriety what she knows, thinks, feels, believes, hopes, strives for. The subtle meanings of words, their skillful arrangement, the attractions of diction, the graces of style and the marvels of suggestion must appeal to her in some degree to enable her to drink with refreshing from Pierian springs.

We talk much and talk learnedly about "instruction" and "inspiration" and many of those who talk and most of those who listen have little or but vague conceptions of the ideas resident in these terms. If "instructing" always carried the thought that some one is building into somebody something of value, then the word would contain an idea for the person who expresses it and would carry a message to the one to whom it is spoken. If it were a part of our common knowledge that when we speak of "inspiring" we mean that we are breathing into some one something that means life and blessing, then it would serve a purpose which it so seldom accomplishes. Teachers have *inspired* pupils to the extent of breathing into them that breath of life which has made it possible for them to become living souls, and they have been able to do this because of the quality of their personality and character of their culture.

Some words have acquired a wealth of meaning because of the associations that cluster about them. The dictionary informs us that a "home" is "a place of abode." The same definition describes the roof which shelters our *feathered* chickens. A "home" means something more than a place where people are housed. To some it is a small white cottage with green blinds, located at the western end of a small circular valley, with hills crowned with trees behind it, green fields in front of it and a glimpse of the outside world through a notch in the mountains. It is a household presided over by a man and a woman whose portraits are painted for us by our Quaker poet in Snow Bound. It is filled with boys who little resemble saints and as little remind one of sweet sinners. It is a place where authority is respected, obedience cheerfully and promptly rendered, simple manners cultivated; where tenderness is a ministering angel, work a saving blessing, duty an opportunity and ambition a sane and influential reality. When this word is pronounced there appears on the canvas a picture clear in outline, beautiful in suggestion, inspiring in teaching and blessed in all its molding power.

When one understands what a word originally meant, the changes through which it has passed and the significance given to it at present, then he is able to understand what others have written and to use language in such a way as to indicate he is not a novice, stumbling in the twilight of his own ignorance.

When one reads the addresses of Lincoln, the orations of Webster, the essays of Walter Savage Landor, the plays of Shakespeare, he discovers they bounded the words they used before they were permitted to be the servants of these princes of the realm. He soon learns that subtractions are losses, that additions do not improve, that wisdom is voiced in noble phrase and that everything has its due proportion and perspective, because these masters knew instinctively, or learned through study, the word to use and the place in which it should be found. Some of these giants may have known things they did not learn, yet they all stand as models to be studied, examples to be followed and as springs of inspiration from which we may be filled.

The student and the teacher would do well to take note of the fact that these kings in this higher kingdom were intensive rather than extensive readers of books. Webster read his Bible, Shakespeare's dramas, Caesar's Commentaries and Burke's speeches. Lincoln read his Bible, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Æsop's Fables and Shakespeare. Webster was the greatest orator of the last century, if not the greatest of all centuries. He had that Doric directness which justified some one in saying he was a "Steam engine in breeches" and that, if he wanted a thunderbolt to hurl at his adversary, he had only to reach out and grasp it as it went hissing by. Possibly, in his later speeches, he filed and pruned them to a point of weakening them, but in his best work his sentences are dignified, majestic, persuasive, powerful. His orations are classic and conclusive; they are the finest specimens of declamatory English extant.

The orator of the day at Gettysburg had all the advantages incident to cultured ancestry, scholarship and academic associations and yet his oration was wanting in that quality which would have given it life and influence. Lincoln's half score of simple sentences are familiar to every school boy and treasured in every patriotic heart. The oration of the one died an untimely death because it did not shed light or possess life. That of the other is immortal because it voices the passion of the true citizen.

It is an obvious if not a safe conclusion to deduce from these facts that he reads best who reads but few books, reads those

which feed his soul and reads them until he has grown to his full stature.

THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER.

Current reading occupies a large, perhaps too large a proportion of the average reader's time. The local newspaper has a just claim to be called an educational institution. It makes a record of local and current history, fosters enterprises which seek to promote the general welfare and renders an amount of unremunerated public service not equalled by any other agency. It has proved itself the loyal ally of the common school. For these and many other reasons the teacher should be a reader of her local paper.

THE METROPOLITAN DAILY.

In the selection of a metropolitan paper a teacher should be governed by several fundamental principles of which the following are the most obvious. The paper selected should contain intelligent discussions of important public questions. It should fairly represent the work of persons and the policy of parties. It should be fearless, but unprejudiced and consistent, in its comments on the service and character of public officers.

Any newspaper which devotes a large proportion of its space to accounts of murders, divorces, scandals and prize fights and which seeks to make these records of vice the most attractive features of its issue is unworthy of the age and unfit to be found in the possession of instructors of youth.

If it invades the home, or violates the privacy of individuals, or seeks to cripple, crush, or injure any person or cause, because of personal malignity or partisan motive it should be tabooed.

No teacher can afford to read a newspaper which gives her unwholesome views of life. She is as culpable when she does this as when she assimilates any other form of moral polution. The list is long and the worthy list is too extended for enumeration.

WEEKLY AND MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

It is necessary for the modern teacher to have a thorough knowledge of the world's work, accurate information as to the

world's workers, a conception of the world's progress, an understanding of the tendencies of the times. In learning of these she will get the details of great events, the biographies of great leaders, the quality and character of the common people and a sane view of the crises of her day. "The Review of Reviews," and "The World's Work" cannot but be helpful in these studies if they are intelligently and faithfully read.

It is also important that the teacher know the spirit of her age and the life which characterizes it. She must discern the hopes, ambitions and aspirations that mold character. She must know something of the well springs of action, the tendencies of the multitude, the quality of desire as well as the general trend and march of human progress in its higher aspects. What men believe, think, feel, hope, seek after and are trying to embody and live, in a word, life in all its aspects and all its possibilities should find in her the earnest student and the candid investigator. It is conceded that "The Outlook" and "The Independent" stand pre-eminent in this field.

The progressive teacher will read at least one magazine which maintains a high literary standard. Current literature of the best quality will find in her an intelligent patron. It is important that she be familiar with the thought and view of the scholar and the literary artist concerning matters of present moment and public interest. Those things which have to do with the home, the school, the church, the office, the community, should be known to her through such interpretations as are given by trained students of these subjects and skillful writers on these matters. "The Atlantic Monthly" easily stands first in the class which assumes to discuss these subjects and "The Nation" is its peer in all the fields it covers.

It goes without saying that the teacher should be in touch and in tune with young life. She should know and love the child. She should have a knowledge of his needs and information as to his surroundings and capacity. She should understand his hopes, appreciate his fears, realize his shortcomings, comprehend his ability and be able to walk with him in his mental, moral, physical, social and recreative activities. These things will come to her through contact, study, incident, story and eternal vigilance. "The Youth's Companion" or "St. Nicholas" will be a most helpful

assistant in knowing child-life and making use of his efforts. (The type in which one of these is printed should debar it from our children, but it may be read by teachers with reasonable safety.)

SUGGESTIONS IN ESTIMATING BOOKS.

While it is true that no one reads with profit unless he comprehends the meaning and force of the words read, yet it is quite as true that he gets but little from his reading unless he is able to pull the pith from the treatise studied. The value of this pith determines the merit of the book and the wisdom of reading it.

Much has been said concerning the value of reading popular volumes. David Harum has been praised and condemned. When one has finished the book and recalls what is found therein that is worth while, he discovers that he has left a sentence, an incident and a pathetic scene. The sentence contains the somewhat startling statement that "We should do unto others as the other fellow wants to do unto us but do it fust." The incident reminds us of David "swapping" horses with the old deacon and how he skinned this latter individual without breaking his hide. The pathetic scene tells us of the payment of the widow's mortgage and helping her to live in comfort the remainder of her days and it exalts the man who gave the country boy his first dime. One has to decide if a sentence of the quality given above; if a commercial incident of doubtful character and the beautiful scene which practically closes the book are worth the time necessary for reading David Harum. These questions decided, a much larger controversy is settled.

It is not safe to say that a book which elaborates only one idea is not worth reading. The incidents, characters, illustrations, arguments, reflections, hints, suggestions, teachings, contained in Dante's Inferno were wrought out for the purpose of making clearer the single thought that the sinner must pay the penalty of his sinning. No one questions that in this sentence is found a sufficient justification for a much larger volume than the great Italian has given us.

Bulwer's Devereux was written for the purpose of making clear to the lovers of diplomacy the arts and artificies of the diplomat. Thrilling as is the story, numerous as are the incidents, exciting as is the crisis and varied as are the teachings,

yet beneath and above it all and running through it all are its central motive and supreme thought.

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

English literature includes the work done by English and American authors. It is so broad in its scope and so multitudinous in its volumes that the untrained reader is at a loss to know where to begin or what is worth reading at all. A knowledge of his capacities and an understanding of his tastes, together with an analysis of the material available, would greatly simplify the matter of selection. Each one is the best judge of what he can do and what he enjoys doing. It is hardly worth while for an adult to punish himself by reading books which he does not enjoy and from which he gets but little information and no inspiration. Unless a book appeals to one, suggests more than it says and stimulates more than it suggests, then it is not the best book for any given person to read. Having settled the question of what will serve him best he is prepared to make intelligent choice of the books he will read.

ITS NATURAL DIVISIONS.

The following analysis of English literature may serve to some extent in making these decisions. The Father of English poetry was Geoffrey Chaucer. He was our first and greatest realist. He painted Englishmen as they lived and walked and talked in orchards and lanes, homes and farms, shops and cloisters, village greens and tournament scenes of old England. He has not painted for us portraits but has revealed to us the knight and the monk, the squire and the friar, the yeoman and the prioress, the merchant and the serjeant at law, the franklain and the tradesman, the shipman and the ploughman, the reeve and the miller and Chaucer and the host of Tabard, so that they stand before us with greater distinctness than would have been possible had we been Chaucer's fellow pilgrims. No other writer has ever matched Chaucer's descriptions of persons, places, things. When we read his pages we live in the England of his day and are part of its people.

Later by some years comes England's greatest idealist, Edmund Spencer. He portrayed men as they are to be when the

Good Day shall have come. The ideal man with the purity and strength of all the virtues is before us not only as a creation of beauty, but as a personality, wise, strong, gracious. Whatever of good the past has had, whatever of blessedness the future may bring, are here embodied and are here regnant. In his personifications of Holiness, Religion, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice and Courtesy he has given us not subtleties, but individuals. He has made abstract qualities live and breathe by giving them a visible form and a local habitation and has endowed them with the beauty and attractiveness of a winning personality.

Shakespeare places all mankind upon the stage and then, with the wisdom of the philosopher, the insight of the poet and the effacement of the recluse, he stands just back of our shoulder and shows us the motives that move, the impulses that control, the passions that sway, the appetites that influence, the limitations that mar, the vices that brutalize, the virtues that ennoble, the graces that adorn, the comeliness that renders beautiful these players in life's drama. The secrets of the heart, the surgings of the soul, the purpose and mission of life, the horrors and the release of death, all these and much more he reveals to us. The influence of each over the others, those things which are external and apparent, those things which are subtle and vital, he tells in statements so simple and sentences so clear that the untutored may see and know of these great and wonderful mysteries. In his dramas, mortals drop their physical frames and stand revealed to us as they will appear when all that now conceals is removed.

Milton and Bunyan permit us to walk through gates of jaspar, along golden streets, in Elysian fields and to kneel at the great white throne. We see that world never beheld by mortal eyes with all the distinctness and all the details with which we view the world in which we live and of which we are a part. Our physical eyes are closed on physical things, our spiritual eyes are open to spiritual scenes. What we shall be and how we shall live when we are denizens of another world, they announce to us.

Pope, Addison and Steele were gifted in diction, style, polish, all the graces of the literary arts. What they said was worth the saying, but the form used in its expression is more worthy

of praise than the thought voiced, or the facts recorded. Their writings are fragrant with those charms which appeal to the artistic sense and satisfy the literary longing.

Burns and Wordsworth were so finely strung and so delicately attuned that they could count the pulse of Nature as it beat out its songs of joy. With one we go to that home on the hill at Mossgiel and out to that little field in which grew the daisy which was torn asunder by the ruthless ploughshare and as we study its form and inhale its fragrance we are taught the lessons of life, death and the judgment to come. As we stand on the river's brink we learn that the yellow primrose is something more than a colored weed to be plucked and thrown aside without thought or care. We go with it on a long *Excursion* and sit beneath the hedge, visit in the cottage, listen to the winds as they sing through the trees and look "unto the hills from whence cometh our strength." As we read these pages all Nature has for us a voice and a message and we see the Creator towering in the hills, blossoming in the valleys, floating in the clouds, coming to us in the waves of the ocean, falling upon us in the showers and blessing us in the sunshine. These embodied visions help us to look "through Nature, up to Nature's God."

Longfellow, Tennyson and Whittier have voiced for us the emotions which soothe or stir the human heart. In "The Day is Done," "Crossing the Bar," and "The Chapel of the Hermits" we find but few ideas not expressed by others, but we arise from the reading of these poems with a stronger desire to be true, a nobler purpose to be righteous and a more fixed determination to walk in that path which leads to the haven of all goodness. Our hearts are fired, our emotions are warmed, our souls are purified, because we have been sitting close to and have been companions of the noblest souls that ever graced and blessed this world of ours.

A SUMMARY.

The list is not long, the number is not large, but the field has been covered.

If realism appeals to you and you want to know of the physical frame and its varied manifestations and see things as they appear to him who uses his physical eyes, then you must read the Canterbury Tales.

If the ideal is strong within you and if you want to learn somewhat of what man is to be when he stands released from all things which hamper and degrade; if the nobler man is attractive to you, you will find the message in the Fairy Queen.

If the human heart in all its subtlety and the human soul with all its mysteries are attractive to you and furnish congenial subjects of study and fruitful fields for investigation, then you must take Shakespeare for your companion and teacher.

If you are interested in the world toward which you are traveling and desire to live in it before you make your habitation there, Milton and Bunyan are your best guides and instructors.

If you care more for adornment than for the thing adorned; if that which apparels is more fascinating than the substance, then you must go to Pope, Addison and Steele.

If you desire to come near to Nature and understand its moods and learn its lessons and be blessed by its teachings, then you must walk over the hills and through the valleys with Burns and Wordsworth.

But if you believe as some do, that feeling is the highest form of intelligence known to the subtlest psychologist; if you realize that it is more important to feel the truth than to know what is true; if out of the heart are the issues of life then you must go your way and be blessed as you walk with Longfellow, Tennyson and Whittier.

While this analysis includes some who stand first in the second class, it does not omit any who stand first in the first class.

It will be noted that each division of literature has a definite field, a message of its own; that each is represented by one or more writers of the first class and that each had pioneers and disciples, but that none of them had fore-runners or successors who were their peers.

Marlowe, Lily, Kidd and Green explored the field, beat the bush and revealed the possibilities of dramatic writing, but it was left for Shakespeare to separate the wheat from the chaff and put in imperishable form more than others have dreamed or seen in scene or story.

His plan was his own, his method he borrowed from no one; his expression was Shakesperian, his gift to the world is unparalleled; his imitators have been legions, his successors have not yet been born.

An attempt has been made to give a bird's eye view of the scope and themes of English literature. Each reader must settle two questions before she can pursue her work with profit. First, what are her motives, tastes, aptitudes. Second, what will best serve her in developing her powers. These are personal questions and must be settled by the individual. It is futile to attempt to limit an adult's intellectual diet.

In what has been said no attempt has been made to cover three important fields of literary effort—history, essays and fiction. The first has been considered in another document and therefore will not be discussed at this time. A word may not be out of place concerning the other two.

ESSAYS.

Plato, in his Republic, gathered and voiced the wisdom of his own age, winnowed and formulated the abstract thinking of preceding ages and anticipated the future by many hundred years. Whatever the wisest had thought and the sanest had said, Plato re-stated in classic form and suggestive sentences. Emerson supplemented his work and blazed the path for years to come. Their writings are the great reservoirs into which are gathered the wisest sayings, the highest thinking, the noblest aspirations, the best and the purest philosophy of life and living. All that the generations have thought is here set in form. They are the rare souls which, at long intervals, winnow the world's wisdom.

In Macaulay one finds the rounded period, the balanced sentence, the splendid imagery, the magnificent swing of paragraph and the convincing force of the impressive climax. Erudition finds its noblest illustration in this greatest of English essayists. To him history has given up its treasures, science has laid bare its secrets, life has contributed its rarest lessons, philosophy has added its noblest contributions and genius has fused them and given us pages in his essays on Milton and History which reward days of study and nights of meditation.

Walter Savage Landor comes the nearest being an "English head on Greek shoulders" of any writer known to history. He had the power to see, the skill to express, and that highest of all qualities, the art of suggesting, which marks so distinctly the great writers of that most wonderful of all the people Europe

has produced—the Greeks. He possesses the fine flavor and the delicate touch which makes reading a delight and study an inspiration. It is no extravagance to say that, for classic, expressive English, he has but few peers and no superiors. One turns from his pages both stimulated and instructed.

FICTION.

In fiction the selection is more difficult and advice is of little value. If one has a liking for the hidden workings of the subtlest natures he will fine food for thought in the Scarlet Letter. If he wants portraits that are true to life and pictures faithful to historic scenes, together with all that makes chivalric days and those who lived therein familiar companions, he would do well to read Scott. If he wants history told through biography and told with that faithfulness that even the historian fails to equal; if he wants to know the struggles that fill men's lives, the events that determine the destiny of nations, the intrigues that mar the worlds record, he must study Bulwer. If he wants to know how sin debases, evil poisons and in what all life finds its measure—its rewards and its punishments—he will go to the works of George Eliot.

UNCLASSIFIED GEMS.

There are certain books which do not lend themselves to classification, but which should be included in this list because of their attractiveness and merit.

In "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush" McLaren has given us several portraits that will repay study. Domsie is possessed of those fine powers which make life beautiful and humanity akin. Mark Hopkins and a log and a student might constitute a university; Dr. Arnold might make noblemen of the sons of nobles; Horace Mann might make possible a common school system; but it was left for old Domsie to render the school its greatest service. He helped the boy of the cottage to find his place and do his work. He knew boys and loved them and because of this love he always found the "lad o' pairts" and found a way for him to go to Edinboro and through the University. For all time he will stand as the ideal common school teacher.

He had the subtlety of the philosopher; the wisdom of the sage; the insight, sympathy and love of a woman and, glorifying all, a passion to serve. A great sorrow was buried in this grave, a broken heart furnished the soil and sustenance for fairest flowers and noblest fruit.

In this little sketch there is more of sound pedagogy than in many a pretentious volume. His comment on the machinery of the modern school is saved from being sarcastic by the pathetic phrase in which it is voiced. He knew what we shall all some day learn,—that it is unwise to devote so much time to the construction and running of the machinery of the school that we have neither time nor strength left for the boy for whose benefit it is supposed to be installed and kept in motion. It is a little story that rings true and blesses life's tenderest moments. Its repeated readings would make it possible for many a teacher to be a means of grace to her pupils, instead of simply a paid instructor.

In "His Mother's Sermon" and the "Physician of the Old School" the author has set before us the service of simple lives faithfully and tenderly lived. He helps us to see that rewards may come through devious channels, but they always reach him who does his work and leaves the issue with the Power higher and wiser than his.

Picciola was written by Saintine for the purpose of helping us to see that titled ancestry, wealth and position may be a curse and that their loss may bring social and intellectual as well as spiritual salvation.

A French nobleman is embittered by certain experiences. He comes to hate himself and his fellows. While in this reckless frame of mind he is cast into prison where he broods and longs for death. Life to him is a curse and he seeks to be rid of it. Isolation permits meditation. Through a narrow window he discovers a delicate flower seeking to sustain life by drawing nourishment from a few crumbs of soil that have been permitted to gather in a crack in the walk. Days multiply; the flower grows; his interest in this waif increases. Shut out from the world and all its attractions and possibilities; turned in upon himself, he goes out to this little companion with all the love of a great heart and with all the devotion of a single passion. He

becomes so absorbed in watching his fragrant friend that each morning he hastens to the window to see if it is still there and each day brings new tortures as he fears that some ruthless hand may destroy it. A day comes when he knows that its destruction would bring to him a sorrow, the keenness of which no previous experience has matched. But he lives to learn that the study and love he has given to this little messenger which is beyond his care, but within his vision, have brought him not only release from prison but the companion who is to walk by his side for the remainder of life's journey. It tore the scales from his eyes and drew the bitterness from his soul. It led him out into the clear and helped him to understand his work and to do it. It made it possible for him to make his life a joy to himself and a blessing to others.

The book is written in that delicate strain which permits the reader to feel he is a co-laborer with an artist who has painted some of the blackest as well as some of the fairest scenes in life's pilgrimage. Its gentle persuasion illumines the darkness, makes clear the pathway and gives strength to walk therein. It helps one to see that hard lines may produce beautiful pictures if laid on in patience, love and faith.

Souvestre plays the role of the "Attic Philosopher" with a skill that charms while it instructs. In his little room at the top of a tall building in Paris he lives and dreams and looks out upon the world with a clear gaze and a sympathetic heart. From his vantage ground he studies the nobleman in his castle, the millionaire in his mansion, the tradesman in his shop, the laborer at his task, the recluse in his seclusion, the beggar in his rags and the abandoned in his vice. In two he finds much of care and more of worry. In most he finds honest hearts and willing hands. He discovers not only the flowers, but the fruits of love, blooming and ripening in humble homes. And in all he finds something which gives him help because from each comes either a message or a warning. His insight permits us to stand by the side of each and read his thought, appreciate his feeling and understand, whether we approve or condemn, his ambition. He lets us see that kindness glorifies the humblest life.

Souvestre helps us to see the littleness of small things, the greatness of large things and the proportion and prospective of all things that go to make up the life of the individual. He also

shows us that happiness and usefulness do not depend upon titles, money or physical comfort, but they do come to him who has a loving heart, an appreciative soul, a mind that seeks to know and a desire that finds ways to lighten the burdens and multiply the blessings of others.

A SUMMARY.

A summary of what has been said would include the following: One must know the *word* before he can appreciate literature. He must know local affairs if he is to judge of things that are being done in distant countries. He must be familiar with the life that marks his own day and the youth with whom he may be associated, if he is to be a man among men. He must know himself and understand his needs. He must learn that others have served themselves best by reading but few books; reading the same books many times, and reading for ideas rather than for facts. He must make some master his familiar companion and learn his message.

(A teacher who does not read magazines and books which treat of the history, science and art of education is unworthy the place she occupies but does not fill. This subject has been considered in previous reports and therefore is omitted from this discussion.)

A RETROSPECT, PRESENT CONDITIONS AND A FORECAST.

THE OLD TIME SCHOOL.

The school of former days was housed in an unpretentious building and located amid grounds neither ample nor attractive. The furniture was awkward in construction and uncomfortable to those who had to use it. The walls and ceilings were blank and often black and dingy. The apparatus consisted of wood blackboards, chunks of chalk, incorrect maps and globes that served several purposes, but not the one for which they are supposed to be constructed. The grounds were denuded of natural attractions and disfigured with sundry abominations. The out buildings were of the crudest possible construction, or the adjoining forests or thickets served in their stead.

The pupils ranged from four to twenty-five years of age. They were muscular, alert, ambitious and capable of doing the hardest mental and physical work. They had in their veins the best blood of the age and came from homes where work was a virtue, learning was respected, scholarship was prized and a large majority were ambitious to master the common school studies and complete the course at some academy. Of these a considerable number were anxious to go to college and looked forward to careers. They had a love for labor, a capacity to dig, a relish for conquest and a respect for results.

The course of study was prescribed, in part, by the teacher, but more largely it was determined by the fancies of the parents, or the caprices of the child. When a study was selected each pupil went his own gait in his own way, his progress being limited by his ability and his application. He referred from time to time to his teacher and under certain circumstances sought assistance in form of an explanation, or a suggestion. This was usually given in such a way as to require more work than would have been necessary to solve the problem unaided. It was one of

the cardinal virtues of the old time school that the child did his own work. In those days the student had all the joy which comes from the mastery of tasks assigned. It never occurred to him that if a "sum" were difficult, or a sentence involved, he could apply to his teacher and have all made clear.

The teacher was a man for the winter term and a woman in the summer. They were both of mature years and possessed scholarly instincts and, to some extent, scholarly attainments. They were stern and sometimes harsh. They believed in their right to rule and they exacted instant and absolute obedience. They had clear ideas of what the child should study and still clearer conceptions of what he could and should do for himself. They were rulers, directors, managers, and, in a sense, instructors. While they counselled and stimulated, yet they were not companions or associates. They were examplars and models in dress, carriage, deportment, habits and accomplishments. They did good because goodness was one of their enduring characteristics.

THE SCHOOL OF TO-DAY.

Many of the school houses of the present time are constructed of suitable material and according to acceptable plans. A few of them have artistic decorations and attractive furnishings and in many of them modern furniture is found. Maps, charts, globes, slate blackboards, pictures, statuary and much other material adorn the rooms and are at the service of the teacher. In such schools the grounds are ample in size and graded into lawns and beautiful with trees, shrubs and flowers and provided with walks and drives. The outbuildings are properly constructed and concealed from public gaze.

The pupils range from five to sixteen years of age. They come from homes where stated tasks are not required and where work is not utilized, as it formerly was, as an educational agency. Obedience is not as prompt as it was when their parents were children. They depend more largely upon each other and their teacher than in former times. Too many of them do not take kindly to work and trying situations. The course of study includes a long array of subjects and still longer list of topics. Text-book work is commenced too early and in the earlier years

is too difficult. The time spent on arithmetic and geography is out of all proportion to the demands made by these branches and is vastly in excess of the value of the results obtained.

A fraction of the teaching force has had academic and professional training and a larger fraction possesses fair scholarship and unusual aptness for teaching. The smallest fraction is grossly deficient in all these particulars. Less than a majority of the teachers are too young in years to be placed in charge of school children.

The most of the failures made by our teachers are due to lack of talent for the work, inadequate scholarship, no professional training, a dislike for the service and a feeling that teaching is a temporary makeshift. Added to these is the teacher's greatest sin—an attempt to do for the child those things which can only be of service when the child does them for himself. In addition to these deficiencies and mistakes too much time is given by the children to studying and attempting to learn isolated details and too little time to discovering, defining, illustrating and mastering principles. They get a smattering of many things but do not master the printed page, comprehend the principles and processes of arithmetic, apply the definitions and rules of grammar, or understand the great underlying facts which determine the location of populations and the founding of industries.

THE SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE.

The school of the future will have a school yard of at least three acres in area. Within its limits the parents of the community, the teacher and the pupils will plant forest trees, large and small fruit trees, vegetables and flowering plants. They will prepare and keep in condition the lawns, provide playgrounds, supply works of art and books of merit and furnish apparatus for teacher and pupils. Two small buildings will also be provided by the local community. In one of these will be found tools and lumber and the boys will have an opportunity to manufacture simple implements and utensils for the school and home. In the other the girls will be taught to cook and sew. The planting and caring for the trees and vegetables and the using of what is produced in these school gardens will enforce many useful lessons.

The home, as well as the school, will be responsible for developing an interest in, and respect for work. The children will render cheerful obedience because of respect for themselves and regard for properly constituted authority. Parents and teachers will assign tasks within the capacity of the children to perform and such as will be helpful in training their powers at the time of their greatest natural activity. The children will resent as an insult any attempt by others to do the work given them to do.

Previous to their eighth birthday they will live in their homes or will be cared for in a modernized kindergarten. In this school they will be allowed to grow physically, and incidentally and perhaps accidentally, they will receive some intellectual training. The first and greatest purpose to be served during this period will be to become strong, eager for activities, resolute in doing things and ambitious to become worthy. Late in this part of their course they will study Nature and be taught to read, spell, write and use numbers as far as they may be illustrated by objects.

For the next two years the work will be limited to learning facts, committing to memory definitions and rules and acquiring a mastery of elementary principles. They will begin to pull the pith from the subject matter read. learn somewhat in detail the processes used in arithmetic, become familiar with the physical features of the school yard. town and county and, in a general way, of the State and Nation. They will learn those things which are the basis of the English language and in many ways will train the memory to be the servant of the reason.

During the concluding years of their common school course they must become masters of the printed page, have a clear understanding of all principles involved in arithmetic, know geography so well that they will understand why grain is grown in the upper Mississippi valley, why New England is noted for manufactures and why cotton is king south of Mason and Dixon's line. They must understand why one sentence is correct and another faulty and be able to apply the rules and definitions which grammarians have formulated.

During their common school course they will also learn something about the men who have made their locality what it is and the Nation what it has become. They will acquire this through

tradition, story, anecdote, biography, formal history. They will discover the point at which we started, the path we have followed, the highway in which we are traveling and they will have glimpses of the goal toward which we are journeying. History will no longer be a confused mass of dates, names, places.

And best of all, in that good day that is coming, they will have a chance to come close to some of the great souls who have lived and served the world by giving to it in poem and picture their message of beauty and instruction. To all these items will be added such instruction in Nature as will enable the children to see the beauty of the flower, enjoy its fragrance and understand the lesson it teaches, as well as to know the seed from which it grew, the root which gives it nurture, the stem which holds it in place, the branches which add to its beauty and the leaves and flowers and fruit which adorn and render it useful.

While they are learning to read and spell and cipher they will learn something of their ancesters who hewed their dwelling-place out of a wilderness and gave it its present relative position. They will know something of the details of the town organization, its officers, their duties and the industries which give employment to the people. They will be less gaudily apparelled and will be less devoted to exciting and demoralizing entertainments. They will indulge in more of that kind of play which is natural to childhood and will give freer rein to the fancy and imagination natural to the child. They will gradually come to see that it is more important that they be, than that they have and more necessary that they be able to use, than that they add to their possessions. Their school days will have been profitably spent if, at their close, they shall have learned that selfishness brings a curse, and self sacrificing service multiplies all blessings.

THE TEACHER.

The teacher of the future will have great natural aptness for teaching. Added to this will be thorough and accurate scholarship, professional training and experience under the direction of a trained inspector.

When she goes to her work she will become a part of the community in which she lives and will take root where she finds

her home and will be willing to assist in some of the enterprises which have for their purpose the promoting of the general welfare.

She will know facts so well that she will be practically unconscious of her knowledge. She will be able to comprehend thought when a master gives it expression. She will have that quickness and sanity of feeling which will respond to every worthy appeal to her emotions. She will know the ancestry of her pupils, the methods which are best suited in giving instruction and she will have clear ideas of the result she may secure in each case. She will have a proper estimate of the relative value of facts and principles. She will not confuse or allow her pupils to be confused by the multiplication of details. While she will be able to instruct, she will also be fitted to inspire and she will see that it is quite as important that she should stimulate wisely as that she should direct properly. She will never be wheedled into doing the work for the child and she will have that firmness which will insist that he perform his own task. She will be skillful in interesting the people of the community in the school and will so direct their efforts that their help will improve it. It will be her supreme desire to make the school the social, literary and art center of the community.

To do this her heart, as well as her head, must be in her service and the school will be, to her, a temple. She will have the devotion of the disciple to the end that she may broaden and purify the children under her care and benefit the community of which she may be the most influential member.

THE PEOPLE.

No school can do its best work unless it is the pride of the people who support it. It will hold the first place when it is the most prominent interest of those among whom it is located and has the intelligent and hearty support of all its patrons. When these conditions exist then all will gladly join in enlarging and rendering useful the grounds in which the school house is located. Then they will paint its exterior, tint or paper its walls, provide the rooms with works of art and books of value and supply the apparatus necessary to the best administration of the school. Before their work is done maps, charts, dictionaries,

globes, statuary, engravings and numberless other articles will make attractive the room in which they are placed, and render more effective the work done by the teacher and children. They will also defend, support and magnify the school because it has their personal interests in charge.

THE TOWN.

About two-thirds of the funds appropriated for the maintenance of the public schools is provided by the towns, cities and plantations of the Commonwealth. The local municipality must raise and expend at least eighty cents per capita for the support of the common schools to be entitled to State aid. In addition to this amount appropriations must be made for school grounds, school buildings, repairs, text-books, apparatus, insurance and general supplies. These expenditures place an unequal, and in many cases, an excessive burden upon certain rural towns.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS.

Any one familiar with our town meetings knows that in many cases the election of school officials is left for the last item of business. Many of these officers are interested in having good schools and are qualified to discharge the duties devolving upon them. In some instances persons are elected who have no concern for the schools and in a few cases persons have been selected who are so grossly incompetent that to print the facts would shock the sensibilities of the entire State.

No one can question the supreme importance of electing men for members of the committee who have had business experience, who are of unquestioned integrity, who have a knowledge of what the schools are, ideas as to what they should be and a controlling desire to make the best possible use of the funds placed at their disposal.

The superintendent should be elected by the committee so that he may be in sympathy and harmony with the board and be willing to carry out its directions. Antagonism between the committee and superintendent means the minimizing of the services of both and thus the schools are crippled and the school fund is worse than wasted.

The superintendent should have a definite knowledge of the studies in which instruction is to be given, be familiar with

methods and devices to be used in giving instruction and be a competent judge of his teaching force. He should be able to commend intelligently, criticize tactfully and stimulate both teachers and pupils. It is his province to suggest such changes and ask for the adoption of such methods as will enable the teacher to do the best work of which she is capable and help the children to get the greatest benefit possible from their studies.

It is not too much to say that superintendents should be educational experts. This means that they should be scholars, have professional training, including experience in the schoolroom, and be capable of administering a system of schools in such a way as to ensure adequate returns to the communities they serve.

The town would do well to place as the first items of business at its annual meeting the election of school officials and the appropriating of funds for the maintenance of schools. Such a course would indicate that it has such pride in its schools as will influence it to give them special prominence and dignity. It is as true of a town as of an individual that it can do much in the direction in which its sympathies and interests are most active.

STATE SCHOOL AID.

The State, at the present time, contributes about one-third the entire amount expended in maintaining the public schools. This amount should be increased until at least one-half this sum comes from this source. The city tax-payer has as great a financial interest in the education of the country school boy as has the boy's next door neighbor. The country boy often finds his later home in the city. His money value in his new home is determined by his education. The city makes its largest sales to those living in the country possessing the best education. In either case the city is financially interested in the education of all the children of the State and this warrants the placing a larger proportion of the burden of supporting the schools upon the State.

SOME STATISTICS.

A few figures may help to make this matter clear. In the illiterate nations of Asia the average daily pay for each man, woman and child is three cents; in Russia it is fourteen cents a

day; in the United States it is forty-eight cents a day; in Massachusetts it is eighty-seven cents a day. The Asiatic nations spend nothing for public education. Massachusetts spends a larger sum per capita for education than any other community of equal property valuation.

The illiterate man earns $150 more than is necessary to supply his physical wants each year between his twenty-fifth and fifty-fifth birthdays. The man who has a common school education has $300 to his credit each year for the same period. The one having a high school education is able to save $600 a year, while a college trained man sees on the right side of the ledger $1200 a year.

These figures bring home with tremendous force the claim recently made by an expert that the detaining of a boy at home for a single day costs the boy, in the end, $10. Put in another form, the statement would be that each day a boy spends in school is worth $10 to him. No one can read these statements and not be impressed with the money value of education. If a man is worth $450 a year more to the State by having a high school education than the illiterate, then the State necessarily has a large financial interest in his better training.

The average pay of a workingman, each year, in the State of Delaware, is $200. The average pay of such men in Massachusetts is $535. These two numbers bear substantially the same relation to each other as do the amounts expended by each State for public schools. While it is true that figures do not lie and that figurers may, yet it must be clear to anyone that there can be no question but that it pays, and pays in dollars and cents, to give our boys and girls the best school advantages the State can provide.

We are appalled when we discover that eighty per cent of the children who attend the public schools stay in them only five years; that sixteen per cent remain for eight years and that four per cent are in the schools eleven years, or two years more than enough to complete a common school course.

All these considerations make apparent a few simple propositions. The State should furnish a larger proportion of the funds needed to maintain the common schools; it should insist that those who have the superintendence of the schools be fitted

for the duties devolving upon them; it should demand that the teachers have a natural aptitude for teaching and an academic and professional training which will fit them to be instructors of youth. It shall also encourage the enlargement of school grounds, the beautifying of schoolrooms and stimulate the providing of such material as will best fit the school to do its best work.

The State will do its duty when it shall make it possible for every child within its limits to attend, free of expense, a kindergarten, a common school and a high school, taught by capable teachers and administered by competent officials and fostered and sustained by the dignity and influence of the commonwealth.

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